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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 000353

SIPDIS

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OSD/ISA FOR ALLEN/POWERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/16/2016

TAGS: PREL TH POL MIL

SUBJECT: BGEN ALLEN'S MEETINGS WITH THAI MOD DEPUTY PERMSEC

APICHART

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES ALEX A. ARVIZU FOR REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

**¶11.** (C) Summary. Thai Ministry of Defense (MOD) Deputy Permanent Secretary Apichart Penkitti told OSD/ISA Principal Director for Asian and Pacific Affairs BGen John Allen on January 16 that the RTG remains interested in sending a team to the Philippines to learn about the Defense Resources Management Study (DRMS) but did not commit to sending a team in the near term. Gen Allen previewed the upcoming visit by Thai officials to the U.S. in March to visit the Joint Forces Command. According to Apichart, the situation in the restive South is improving, in part due to increased cooperation between local citizens and the security forces. Gen Allen noted USG support for the RTG effort to deal with the South, concern over the potential for possible human rights violations, and the importance of civil affairs in the restive provinces. End Summary.

DRMS

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**¶12.** (C) Gen Allen reviewed the standing invitation by the Philippine Department of National Defense (DND) to the Thai MOD to send a team to Manila to review the DND's positive experience with the U.S. DRMS process. Allen underscored that any information shared with the U.S. survey team would remain a secret between the team and the RTG. Apichart explained that the RTG remained interested in such a trip but faces financial constraints. Gen Allen reiterated that the U.S. would pay for DRMS but that we need an answer soon or would have to offer the current slot to another country.

JFCOM

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**¶13.** (C) On a separate note, Gen Allen reviewed the positive meetings between Prime Minister Thaksin and Secretary Rumsfeld in September 2005. Gen Allen explained that one of his purposes in traveling to Thailand was to lay the groundwork for a trip by Thai officials to Washington in March to study U.S. efforts at transformation at the U.S. Joint Forces Command. Transforming the armed forces is a difficult task and involves more changes in mindset than systems and equipment. Such changes, if successful however, could pay dividends in the RTG capability to deal with violence in the South.

SOUTH

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**¶14.** (C) According to Apichart, the situation in the South is improving. Local citizens are cooperating with the government, leading to the arrests of key separatists, including two people involved with the murder of two Marines in Narathiwat late last year. The Emergency Decree promulgated in July 2005 is set to expire (Note. The decree is only valid for three months at a time. End Note) on January 20, but the government will extend it once again. When asked about Thai-Malay cooperation, Apichart explained that relations between the two sides have improved following senior-level Defense official meetings. Gen Allen reminded Apichart that the USG is ready to support Thailand in the South and that we remain concerned about efforts to deal with separatists using extra-judicial means. That said, it appears that the RTG focus on civil affairs was producing progress.

**¶15.** (U) BGen Allen has cleared this message.  
ARVIZU